

Mike's Cereal by **urdearestmom**

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Language: English

Characters: Eleven/Jane H., Mike W.

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-03-02 08:15:23

Updated: 2017-03-02 08:15:23

Packaged: 2019-12-17 15:13:37

Rating: K

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,401

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: In which Eleven is a cereal thief. Part 2 of the series.

Mike's Cereal

Prompt 2: "Who wouldn't be angry? You ate all of my cereal and faked your death for three years!"

Mike Wheeler was once again lying in his bed, awake, in the dead of night. He looked at his alarm clock.

2:11 AM.

He sighed and returned to staring blearily at the window.

It had been this way ever since she had disappeared on that dark night in November 1983. It was almost a year since then, and Mike was finally starting to lose hope that she was ever alive. The only reason he even believed she had ever existed was that Lucas and Dustin could affirm that she had indeed been their friend in that week Will was missing. They, however, had accepted that she must be dead after the first 4 or so months with no sign of her.

Mike on the other hand, could not let go. He had *kissed* her, for god's sake. Clearly she was not just his friend. Not to him, at least. The other boys didn't know about the kiss because Mike had never told them for fear of the teasing he would get.

Mike heard the creak of the bottom step. He immediately shot up in his bed, heart pounding, thinking there was an intruder downstairs.

"Mike?"

It was almost a whisper, but he heard it. And decided then and there that he had gone off the deep end. He was hearing her voice now? He had to be imagining it. It couldn't be possible.

"Mike?" it came again, at the same volume.

No. It had to be a figment of his crazy imagination, finally gone haywire after so long producing this very scenario on so many other nights like this one. Even so, Mike got out of bed and went to the door, which had been left slightly ajar.

He peeked out and saw nothing but shadows.

He had almost made it to his bed when he heard it again, this time right outside his door.

"Mike?"

He rushed back over and threw open the door as quietly as possible. There was a figure standing in the hall, eyes gleaming in the darkness.

"Eleven?"

"Yes."

Mike had already made up his mind as to the existence of such a situation, but at this moment he was forced to reconsider the possibility. Could she really be there, standing outside his room, or was he just dreaming? Or worse, awake and hallucinating?

The figure walked through the doorway and Mike flicked on his bedside lamp. Suddenly, the room flared with light and the person's face was illuminated.

It was her!

Her hair was long, up to the middle of her back now, and she was taller, but she had the same face. The same permanently startled expression.

Mike could do nothing but stare at her.

"Are you really here? I'm not dreaming?" he choked.

He felt as though all the emotions he had felt in the last year were going to burst through and he might just spontaneously combust.

She nodded.

"I'm here."

So he wasn't insane then. Hah, take that Lucas!

Mike decided to poke her just to see if she was real. She was.

He started to cry, but turned away so she wouldn't see the tears.

"I just- oh my *god*, I can't believe you're *here*, El! You're home! You're finally home!" he said, muffled through the pyjama sleeve that he was using to wipe his face.

She touched his back and he went ramrod straight.

"Mike."

"Yeah?"

"Why are you crying?"

He turned around and looked askance at her.

"I'm not stupid, Mike." she said.

"No- no of course you're not, I just- I'm so shocked and happy and just- I can't even describe it! I missed you so much El!"

"What is 'miss'?"

He sat on his bed and she followed.

"Well, missing a person is when you feel really sad because there's someone that's gone and you can't see them anymore. Sometimes that happens when people move away, or when they die, like I- like I thought you did," he replied.

"You thought I died?"

"Well, yeah, I mean, you disappeared a year ago and we've had no sign of you since then!"

"I'm sorry, Mike."

Mike was baffled.

"Sorry for what? You didn't do anything wrong!"

She looked down.

"I ate your cereal."

Now he was confused.

"You ate my- you ate my cereal? What do you mean?"

"Your cereal. I ate it."

"Well yeah, I got that already, but how did you even eat it? Actually, where have you been all this time?"

She looked at him again.

"Dark. Not Upside Down, not here. In-Between."

He was still confused, but he remembered some strange things that had happened recently.

About a month before, his cereal began disappearing. One morning, the bag would be half-full and the next it would be nearly empty. This had happened every time Karen bought another box of Mike's cereal and it got to the halfway point. Karen, of course, thought it was Mike eating it when no one was looking, seeing as no one else liked his cereal. Mike could offer no excuse because he had no idea what was going on himself, so of course he had been punished.

"And how did you eat my cereal, exactly?"

Her hands curled in her lap.

"In-Between. Needed energy for gate. Could see your house, thought your cereal was good. Ate it."

Comprehension dawned on Mike.

"So you stole my cereal from some place between dimensions and ate it because you needed energy."

This was followed by a sudden burst of anger as Eleven nodded affirmatively.

"So you've been alive and mostly well, well enough to watch us and take my cereal, and you didn't think to give me at least some sign that you were okay? Didn't you see what I was going through? I have literally been going more and more insane every day that passes without you, El!"

El seemed to shrink back a little.

"Mike, are you angry?"

He made an incredulous noise and stood up from the bed.

"Who wouldn't be angry? You ate all of my cereal and faked your death for a year!"

She shook her head.

"No. No fake."

"Then why didn't you tell me? If you could see me and take things from my house, couldn't you have left me something too? Something to tell me you were alive? Goddammit, El!"

"I did."

He looked at her, so caught up in his instant rage that he hadn't noticed he was frightening her.

"What do you mean, you did? I've been thinking you were dead for a year!"

"I ate your cereal. But never all. Always eleven cereals left."

He scoffed.

"Like I would've counted the cereals left in the bags, my mom would've really made me go to a shrink then!"

He realized something else.

"And my cereal only started disappearing a month ago! What were you doing for the rest of that time, wandering around in the dark?"

She touched his arm gently.

"Mike. Only found you when I started eating cereal. I was nothing before I found you. Was waiting to be something so I could come back."

"So, what, you actually vaporized yourself and you had to reform or something?"

She nodded again. Mike deflated, all of his anger disappearing as abruptly as it had appeared.

He sighed.

"I'm sorry, El. I'm just being a mouthbreather right now. I didn't scare you or anything, right?" he said.

"Little bit." she murmured.

"Oh Jesus, I'm so sorry! I shouldn't have gotten angry at you!"

"Mike."

"Yeah?"

"It's ok. I understand. Friends forgive friends."

Mike thanked his lucky stars that she was alive. Only then did he realize that he would have a very difficult time explaining to his mother why there was a girl in his room in the middle of the night, so he decided to let El sleep in his bed and he would sleep on the La-Z-Boy downstairs.

"If you need anything, El, just come wake me up, okay?"

"Okay."

"Night, El."

"Night, Mike."